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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/15/2012
TAGS: [PTER](#) [KCRM](#) [PGOV](#) [BG](#)
SUBJECT: KIBRIA'S SON DISCOUNTS NEW INVESTIGATION OF
FATHER'S ASSASSINATION

Classified By: Ambassador Patricia Butenis, reason para 1.4(d)

1.(C) Summary. The son of slain Awami League leader Shah Kibria says the police officers assigned to re-investigate his father's case are sincere but lack the skills to find the "true" culprits, which the family maintains are senior figures in the former ruling party. The government has yet to address the contradictions arising from its holding of two, mutually exclusive groups of suspects. End Summary.

12. (C) On May 14, Reza Kibria, son of slain Awami League leader Shah Kibria, told RLA that he met with the newly assigned Investigating Officer and the Superintendent of Police in Sylhet about the government's reopening of his father's case. He said the two police officers, plus the Inspector General of the Criminal Investigation Division, an officer from the Rapid Action Battalion, and another person whose identity he forgot, comprise a five-person committee that was formed two months ago to supervise the new investigation.

13. (C) The committee, however, has yet to receive written authority from the Home Ministry to begin interviewing witnesses and suspects, Kibria said. When the police officers told him that Bangladesh lacks the forensic capabilities to analyze properly grenade fragments and other evidence harvested from the assassination scene, Kibria said he suggested the police contact the United Nations or the United States for assistance.

14. (C) Kibria welcomed the presence of RAB in the committee because "they have a good record" in successful investigations, but he expressed doubt about a successful resolution of the case. The government's intentions appear to be sincere, he said, but the police lack the means to be effective.

15. (C) Comment: The Kibria family continues to assert the non-complicity of the eight Kibria murder suspects now stuck in prison because of the indefinite suspension of their trial following a Kibria legal maneuver to force a new investigation to find the "true" culprits in the then-ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party. They have also downplayed the reported confessions of two Harakatul Jihad-Bangladesh (HUJIB) activists captured in 2006, even though at one point they said that Kibria was killed because of his opposition to Islamic extremism. Reza intended to contest in the suspended 2007 parliamentary election as an Awami League candidate but now says he might quit Bangladesh because he has "given up hope" for the country's future.

16. (C) In her farewell calls, the Ambassador will reiterate to appropriate officials the USG's strong interest in the effective reinvestigation of the Kibria case and to consider any requests for technical assistance. During several rounds of consultations in the spring of 2005 between police officers and TDY LEGATT from New Delhi, it became clear there was very little evidence recovered from the crime scene and that the police had no clear idea what to ask for. Some of that incoherence was attributed to political interference to stall the investigation, an impediment which appears to have been removed. A key first step for the government is to sort out the contradictions arising from its case against the eight under-trial suspects, who prosecutors say murdered Kibria to advance the interests of a local BNP official, and the two HUIB activists who say they attacked Kibria, and two others, as part of a broader campaign against "anti-Islamic" interests.

BUTENIS